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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently amended) A method for conducting electronic commerce, comprising:

browsing, by a user, for an item at an electronic store (e-Store) over an electronic

medium;

automatically recognizing, without human intervention, that the user is lost in attempting

to find said item; and

interactively querying by an electronic store assistant, at any time during a session, of

said user whether the user needs help in finding said item,

wherein said electronic store assistant is implemented in software as one of a program

and a search window which is activated based on one of a query and activated automatically after

a predetermined number of navigations by said user,

wherein said automatically recognizing, without human intervention, comprises:

considering a history of the browser based on said query entered in said browsing

by said user;

determining, based on said history and said query, whether an automated help

resource is necessary;

determining, based on said history and said query, whether a human help resource

is necessary; and

routing said user to at least one of said automated help resource and said human

help resource, to help said user.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

logging into a computer system by the user.

3.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said browsing comprises

navigating through a hierarchy of categories.

4.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said recognizing includes detecting by an e-

Store assistant that the user is lost, said querying being performed by said e-Store assistant.

5.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said recognizing includes said user

recognizing that the user is lost and said user requesting help from an e-Store assistant.

6.   (Canceled).

7.   (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said e-Store assistant comprises a software

dialer which dials up a telephone number of a customer support center.

8.   (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

considering the history of the browser based on a query that said user has typed in;

determining whether the user is lost; and

routing said user to a help resource to help the user.

9.   (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said help resource comprises one of a live

person and a chat program.

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10-25. (Canceled).

26.   (Currently amended) A system for performing electronic commerce, comprising:

         means for browsing, by a user, for an item at an electronic store (e-Store) over an

electronic medium;

         means for automatically recognizing, without human intervention, that the user is lost in

attempting to find said item; and

         means for interactively querying, at any time during a session, of said user whether the

user needs help in finding said item,

         wherein said means for automatically recognizing comprises:

                 means for considering a history of the browser based on a query entered in said

browsing by a user;

                 means for determining, based on said history and said query, whether an

automated help resource is necessary;

                 means for determining, based on said history and said query, whether a human

help resource is necessary; and

                 means for routing said user to at least one of said automated help resource and

said human help resource, to help said user.

27.   (Currently amended) A signal-bearing medium tangibly embodying a program of

machine-readable instructions executable by a digital processing apparatus to perform a method

of conducting electronic commerce, said method comprising:

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browsing, by a user, for an item at an electronic store (e-Store) over an electronic

medium;

automatically recognizing, without human intervention, that the user is lost in attempting

to find said item; and

interactively querying, at any time during a session, of said user whether the user needs

help in finding said item,

wherein said automatically recognizing comprises:

considering a history of the browser based on a query entered in said browsing by

a user;

determining, based on said history and said query, whether an automated help

resource is necessary;

determining, based on said history and said query, whether a human help resource

is necessary; and

routing said user to at least one of said automated help resource and said human

help resource, to help said user.

28.   (Currently amended) A method for conducting electronic commerce, comprising:

browsing for an item at an electronic store (e-Store) over an electronic medium;

automatically recognizing, without human intervention, that the user is lost in attempting

to find said item; and

interactively querying, at any time during a session, of said user whether the user needs

help in finding said item,

wherein said automatically recognizing comprises:

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considering a history of the browser based on a query entered in said browsing by

a user;

determining, based on said history and said query, whether an automated help

resource is necessary;

determining, based on said history and said query, whether a human help resource

is necessary; and

routing said user to at least one of said automated help resource and said human

help resource, to help said user.

29.   (Canceled).

30.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 28 29, wherein said automated help resource

comprises a help source that automatically assists said user without human intervention.

31.   (Previously presented) A method for conducting electronic commerce, comprising:

browsing, by a user, for an item at an electronic store (e-Store) over an electronic

medium;

automatically considering, without human intervention, a history of said browser based

on a query entered in said browsing by said user;

automatically determining, without human intervention, based on said history and said

query, whether an automated help resource should be launched;

automatically determining, without human intervention, based on said history and said

query, whether a human help resource should be contacted;

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automatically routing, without human intervention, said user to at least one of said

automated help resource and said human help resource, to help said user.

32.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 31, wherein said automated help resource

comprises a help source that automatically assists said user without human intervention.

33.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein said automated help resource

interactively queries, at any time during a session, said user whether the user needs assistance

with said browsing.

34.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 31, wherein said human help resource

interactively queries, at any time during a session, said user whether the user needs assistance

with said browsing.